



**For Immediate Release
April 6, 2006**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION TO
OFFER ACCESSIBLE BIRD WATCHING OPEN HOUSE IN EAST LONGMEADOW**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will hold a free introductory bird watching open house for people of all ages on Sunday, April 23, 2006 from 9:00AM – 12:00PM at the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge located off Emerson Road in East Longmeadow.

The open house will feature guided walks and car caravans along the roadways of the wildlife refuge by members of the Allen Bird Club. Optical equipment, listening devices and folding chairs will be available. The event will be inclusive of families, senior citizens and people of all abilities; anyone new to bird watching is invited to attend. Experienced birders are encouraged to attend and share their expertise. The center for the event will be the intersection of Pond Side and Bark Haul Roads within the refuge. Limited refreshments will be served.

The event will be cancelled if severely inclement weather is forecasted. For a taped message of the program status, call 413-545-5758.

This open house is a collaborative effort between the DCR Universal Access Program, the Allen Bird Club, the Hampshire Bird Club and All Out Adventures, an Easthampton-based outdoor recreation organization. This program is made possible through a U.S. Department of Education grant called *Project INSPIRE*, which seeks to develop and expand sustainable recreation opportunities for people of all abilities through collaborative ventures.

For directions to the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, or for further information, please call Allen Bird Club member Kathy Conway at 413-269-7130.

For further information on Project INSPIRE and accessible recreation opportunities in Massachusetts State Forests and Parks please visit http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access.

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